



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING  
STAFF REPORT**

**Tentative Notice of Action**

*Promoting the wise use of land  
Helping build great communities*

MEETING DATE <b>November 13, 2015</b> LOCAL EFFECTIVE DATE <b>November 27, 2015</b>	CONTACT/PHONE <b>Airlin M. Singewald</b> <b>Project Manager</b> <b>(805) 781-5198</b>	APPLICANT <b>Verizon Wireless / City of Arroyo Grande</b>	FILE NO. <b>DRC2014-00108</b>
SUBJECT <b>A request by VERIZON WIRELESS AND CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE for a Minor Use Permit (DRC2014-00108) to allow the construction and operation of an unmanned wireless communications facility, consisting of 12 new 6' tall panel antennas mounted on top of an existing 25' tall water storage tank (top of antennas extend to a height of 33'-5" above ground level), 12 new Remote Radio Units (RRUs) mounted behind the panel antennas, ground equipment within a new 11'-6" x 16'-10.5" pre-fabricated equipment shelter, a new 132 gallon diesel standby generator, and installation of appurtenant mounting brackets, equipment, and hardware. The proposed project will result in approximately 200 square feet of site disturbance on a 0.59-acre parcel in the Residential Suburban land use category. The project site is located on an existing water storage tank at 805 Stagecoach Road, at the intersection with Via El Cielo Road, approximately 1/2-mile northeast of the Arroyo Grande city limits. The site is in the San Luis Bay sub-area of the South County planning area.</b>			
RECOMMENDED ACTION <b>Approve Minor Use Permit DRC2014-00108 based on the findings listed in Exhibit A and the conditions listed in Exhibit B.</b>			
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION <b>A Class 3 Categorical Exemption (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15303) was issued on August 13, 2015 (ED15-033)</b>			
LAND USE CATEGORY <b>Residential Suburban</b>	COMBINING DESIGNATION <b>None</b>	ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER <b>047-126-010</b>	SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) <b>4</b>
PLANNING AREA STANDARDS: <b>Arroyo Grande Planning Impact Area</b> <i>Does the project meet applicable Planning Area Standards: Yes - see discussion</i>			
LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS: <b>Communications Facilities</b> <i>Does the project conform to the Land Use Ordinance Standards: Yes - see discussion</i>			
FINAL ACTION <b>This tentative decision will become final action on the project, effective on the 15<sup>th</sup> day following the administrative hearing, or on November 20, 2015, if no hearing was requested, unless this decision is changed as a result of information obtained at the hearing or is appealed.</b>			
EXISTING USES: <b>City of Arroyo Grande water tank</b>			
SURROUNDING LAND USE CATEGORIES AND USES: <b>North: Residential Suburban / residences</b> <b>South: Residential Suburban / residences</b> <b>East: Residential Suburban / residences</b> <b>West: Residential Suburban / residences</b>			
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING &amp; BUILDING AT: COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER γ SAN LUIS OBISPO γ CALIFORNIA 93408 γ (805) 781-5600 γ FAX: (805) 781-1242</b>			

OTHER AGENCY / ADVISORY GROUP INVOLVEMENT: The project was referred to: Public Works, Building, Environmental Health, Cal Fire, and the City of Arroyo Grande	
TOPOGRAPHY: Gently sloping	VEGETATION: Grasses and Ornamental Landscaping
PROPOSED SERVICES: Water Supply: Not applicable Sewage Disposal: Not applicable Fire Protection: Cal Fire	ACCEPTANCE DATE: August 12, 2015

## DISCUSSION

### Project Site

The proposed project is located on a 0.6-acre parcel containing two City of Arroyo Grande water tanks. The parcel is surrounded by a chain link perimeter fence and is vegetated with oaks and grasses. The site is located at 805 Stagecoach Road, at the intersection with Via El Cielo Road, approximately ½-mile northeast of the Arroyo Grande city limits. The site is within the Residential Suburban land use category. Surrounding land uses consist of single family homes on approximately 1 to 5 acre parcels.



The project site is situated within an oak woodland and supports approximately 24 coast live oak trees varying in size from 3" to 18" diameter at breast height.

According to the biological assessment (SWCA Environmental Consultants; July 2010) prepared when the second water tank was installed, the project site does not support any sensitive plant or wildlife species.

### Proposed Project

Verizon Wireless is proposing to locate a new wireless communications facility on and adjacent to an existing municipal water tank owned by the City of Arroyo Grande.

Specifically, the proposed facility would consist of the following improvements:

1. Installation of 12 new 6' tall panel antennas in three sectors (4 antennas per sector) mounted to the top of an existing 25' tall water tank. The panel antennas would extend to a height of 33'-5" above ground level.
2. Installation of ground equipment within a new 11'-6" x 16'-10.5" equipment shelter and a new 132 gallon diesel standby generator within a chain-link fenced 34'-7" x 20' lease area.

3. Installation of coaxial cables in an underground trench (approximately 40 feet) running from the proposed equipment cabinets, up the side of the tank in a vertical cable tray, and to each tank mounted antenna.
4. The site is accessed from an existing driveway. No new access road improvements are necessary.

## PLANNING AREA STANDARDS

### **Arroyo Grande Planning Impact Area**

The proposed project is located in the Arroyo Grande Planning Impact Area and is subject to the standards in Section 22.98.050, which state that applications for discretionary projects within this area shall be referred to the City of Arroyo Grande and that the County shall address any land use or environmental concerns raised by the City during the referral process.

*The proposed project complies with this standard because the proposed project was referred to the City of Arroyo Grande and the City did not submit any comments.*

## LAND USE ORDINANCE COMPLIANCE

### **Section 22.30.180 – Communications Facilities**

This section of the Land Use Ordinance (Title 22) contains specific land use permit and application content requirements as well as siting and design standards for proposed wireless communications facilities. As described below, the proposed project meets these requirements:

#### Radio Frequency Analysis

Section 22.30.180(B) requires applications for communications facilities to provide estimates of non-ionizing radiation generated and/or received by the facility. These shall include estimates of the maximum electric and magnetic field strengths at the edge of the facility site and the extent that measurable fields extend in all directions from the facility.

*The project complies with this requirement because the applicant supplied a report to evaluate the proposed communications facility for compliance with appropriate guidelines limiting human exposure to radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic fields. According to the RF report for this project (Hammett & Edison, Inc.; March 10, 2015), the maximum RF emissions from the proposed facility would be equivalent to 15 percent of the applicable public exposure limit at ground level, and 11 percent of the exposure limit at the second-floor elevation of the nearest residence (located at least 100 feet away from the project site). The report concludes that the facility would operate within the FCC standard for RF emissions, and recommends the posting of explanatory signs is recommended to establish compliance with occupational exposure limitations.*

#### Permit Requirements

Section 22.30.180(C)(1) requires Minor Use Permit approval for proposed wireless communications facilities that are either a) installed on existing structures, or b) co-located at existing communications facility sites. Conditional use permit approval is required for all other communications facilities.

*This project requires Minor Use Permit approval because the proposed antennas would be mounted on, and painted to match, an existing water tank.*

#### Co-location

According to Section 22.30.180(C)(2)(b), when co-location is not proposed, applications for communications facilities must provide information pertaining to the feasibility of joint-use antenna facilities, and discuss the reasons why such joint-use is not a viable option or alternative to a new site.

*The project complies with this requirement because the proposed panel antennas would be collocated on, and painted to match, an existing water tank, and the ground-mounted equipment would be screened from public view by a chain link fence with beige slats. Collocation at the nearest existing facility (located 1.5 miles to the northwest) would not meet the project's coverage objective.*

#### Development Standards

According to Section 22.30.180(C)(3)(b), the preferred placement for new wireless communication facilities is on existing structures, completely hidden from public view or painted and blended to match existing structures. In addition, all facilities shall be screened with vegetation or landscaping. Where screening with vegetation is not feasible, the facilities shall be disguised to resemble rural, pastoral architecture (e.g. windmills, barns, trees) or other features determined to blend with the surrounding area and be finished in a texture and color deemed unobtrusive to the neighborhood in which it is located.

*The project complies with this requirement because the proposed panel antennas would be collocated on, and painted to match, an existing water tank, and the ground-mounted equipment would be screened from public view by a chain link fence with beige slats. Also, the proposed project would be compatible with the visual character of the existing utility infrastructure (two water tanks) developed on the site.*

#### Unused Facilities

According to Section 22.30.180(C)(4), all obsolete or unused facilities shall be removed within twelve (12) months of cessation of telecommunication operations at the site.

*The project is consistent with this standard because the applicant is required to enter into a performance agreement and financial instrument for site restoration prior to establishment of the use.*

#### COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP COMMENTS

The proposed project is located within an advisory group area. As described above, the project was referred to the City of Arroyo Grande and no comments were received.

#### AGENCY REVIEW

**Public Works Department** – No concerns

**Building Department** – See attached referral response

**Environmental Health Department** – Hazardous materials business plan required

**Cal Fire** – See fire safety plan

#### LEGAL LOT STATUS

The single lot was legally created by a parcel map or deed at a time when that was a legal method of creating lots.

Staff report prepared by Airlin M. Singewald and reviewed by Karen Nall.